France

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The professionalization of history in France is part of a long process in which the state has played a pivotal role. This is both because the state has enjoyed a near monopoly on education and because the discipline of history enjoined as it has been to play a role in building national and, later on, republican identity, has been tightly controlled. Furthermore, the features peculiar to the French situation (centralization, uniformity of structures and territorial imbalances) enable us to identify the main elements of a *modus operandi* of enduring consistency.

History in France has always assumed an important role in the formation of elites. This has been so ever since the Ancien Régime, even if at that time it was no more than a pedagogical tool. The first museums were created in the early 19th century, mainly by groups of amateur historians and archaeologists who foregathered in local academies. They brought together miscellaneous collections of local and archaeological artefacts, as well as paintings. The aim was to provide a broad survey of regional heritage. This was true of museums such as the Musée du Berry founded in Bourges in 1834 or the Musée de Bretagne in Rennes in 1794, whereas others specialized in archaeology, such as the Musée de l'Arles antique in Provence. At the same time, other museums grew out of the idea of promoting medieval aspects, such as the Bayeux Tapestry in Normandy (Musée de la tapisserie de Bayeux, 1794) or the Musée des thermes de Cluny (located in Paris's Latin Quarter on the ruins of Roman buildings. And a museum dedicated to the "glory of France" was founded at the Château de Versailles by Louis-Philippe in 1837.

The teaching of history became a central topic of discussion during the revolutionary period (1789-1795), even though decades went by before it officially entered the primary and secondary curriculum (being introduced into secondary education by François Guizot under the July Monarchy and into primary education by Victor Duruy in 1865). However, from 1808, special chairs in history were created in all the new arts faculties set up by Napoleon within the Imperial University. This presence was reasserted in 1838 when the discipline was assigned one of five mandatory arts faculty chairs. History teaching featured prominently in the Ecole normale supérieure, was assigned its own *agrégation* (a public exam conducted by the state) from 1830 and was in large part lay behind the founding of the Ecole pratique des hautes études in 1868. It also assumed an important placeat the Ecole libre des sciences politiques established in 1872 by Emile Boutmy.

The civic dimension of history teaching and the role attributed to it from the mid-nineteenth century in the shaping of national and later on, of republican identity is of long-term significance. It implies that in this field, decisions regarding the way the discipline was taught were subject to tight political control. In higher education

this has tended to slacken gradually, nonetheless playing a clear role in formulating an approach to the discipline that teachers of history have had to adopt, whatever their teaching level. We should also recall that teachers in France have mostly been (and until 1875 in higher education were entirely) civil servants.

The French case is also marked by the very close ties in disciplines like history between secondary and higher education. These ties are much in evidence with regard to the careers of historians and permanently shape the way the discipline is organized. The *agrégation* plays a key role: while its primary aim is the recruitment of secondary teachers, it nevertheless becomes the vital criterion around which the careers of academic historians revolve. The vast majority of these have begun their careers as secondary-school teachers before aspiring to positions in higher education. Therefore, there have always been very many teachers in higher education holding an *agrégation*. Finally, to sit on the examining board of the *agrégation* has remained throughout the period in question a sign of academic dedication to the field. This pattern has remained stable in the long term, except in rare periods of major recruitment, and continues to be the norm to this day. The importance of the *agrégation* as a mark of distinction lies behind the emphasis given to the training of future teachers of history within universities, where the idea of a predominantly research-oriented education tends to be overridden. In what is primarily a generalist course programme specialization comes late and a historian's professionalism is characterized by a mastery of an extremely broad historical field.

The *agrégation* plays a unifying role at an intellectual level between the two levels of education. It requires adaptation of scholarly works by future secondary-school teachers, and produces a consistent and systematic body of knowledge (the study of the four main historical periods to the same level, history test outside the programme requiring mastery of bibliography). It contributes to conserving the very forms of historical "demonstration" through the practice of dissertation and commentary on documents. It imposes teaching constraints on teachers in higher education (recurrent preparation of students for the public exam), even of their output (publishing handbooks); it is a place of arbitration of the various historical schools. At the same time it is a distinct stumbling-block to widespread research in that it is energy-sapping for academics, especially in small universities where they cannot afford enough manpower to "rotate" the *agrégation* course among the teachers.

Another general feature lies in the direct involvement of the state in other aspects of historical output outside teaching, whether in the way archives are organized or in the monitoring of learned societies. This gradually came to the fore in the course of the nineteenth century through the establishment of public management structures for the discipline.

The first of these concerned public records. The Revolution became natural heir to the royal archives in 1790 and created the Archives nationales to gather them together and amass further public documents. In 1796, public record offices were created in each department under the authority of the Archives nationales. It was mostly after 1830, though, that the historical mission of the Archives nationales became apparent. In 1821, a specific school was founded, the Ecole des Chartes,in order to form the future archivists. The archives were first placed under the Ministry of the Interior, and transferred in 1870 to the Ministry of Public Instruction, before ending up under the Ministry of Culture in 1959. Archives employed about 250 staff in 1900 (200 in the departmental record offices and 50 at the Archives nationales) and 3,400 in 1994. The Archives nationales were gradually organized into specialized departments (military records and diplomatic records in the late nineteenth century, contemporary and overseas records in the 1960s), while the network of departmental record offices grew in consistency. There is no doubt that a vigorous policy of collecting private archives, hosted within the various departments of public record offices, has led to the dearth of private archival centres, most of which emerged in the latter years of the twentieth century.

State intervention in the organization of historical output only began in earnest, however, under the July Monarchy, with François Guizot, the historian and Minister of Public Instruction from 1832. Even though in the first instance Guizot created a private society (the Société de l'histoire de France in 1833), he soon imposed the notion of state control over historical work through a policy of subsidy, encouragement as well as guidance of learned societies attached to a central institution, the Comité des Travaux historiques (CTH, 1834). This committee was entrusted to supervise research and the publication of hitherto unpublished documents backed by state funding. Throughout the nineteenth century, commissions were set up within the CTH to publish historical documents. Moreover, this institution’s aim was to bring together and guide privately set-up learned societies into meeting at yearly conferences from 1861. The most recent offshoot of this historical activity by the state may be seen since the 1970s in the formation of committees for the history of the various ministries.

Lastly, the close relationship between history and the state may also be seen in the broader context of politics. The discipline of history has never fully shaken itself free from government as is shown in the preponderance of work on the state and the dearth of research on the history of minorities. Countless historians, especially in the nineteenth century, pursued careers in politics (this is true of Guizot or Duruy for example). The socialist deputy Jaurès secured through the National Assembly the establishment of a commission for the publication of hitherto unpublished documents relating to economic life under the French Revolution. In 1904 committees by department were organized that were dependent upon it. Although this commission was waning after 1914, it carried on into the 1980s. In addition, the Paris city fathers likewise grasped the nettle when in 1887 they set up a

municipal research commission on the history of Paris during the Revolution and the modern era. While this twofold position tended to die out in the following century, involvement in the realm of politics remained important with the setting up of historians' commissions prescribed by government. The two world wars thus provided the opportunity to establish public bodies of history and memory: the Société d'histoire de la Guerre founded in 1917 and the Comité d'histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale in 1950. More recently, the state has overseen the setting up of commissions on the roster of Jews from Vichy, on Paul Touvier, or on the Islamic veil (1990s and 2000s). This is also true of major historical commemorations driven by the state and handled by academics (the centenary and bicentenary of the French Revolution for example).

History in France is highly centralized both geographically and institutionally. Courses are standardized and decision-making is nationwide, this is as true of the secondary and higher education recruitment examination as it is of national programmes such as diplomas, but applies to procedures for scholarly assessment as well. This control is in the hands of institutions, all of which are in Paris. This is also where the most highly esteemed centres of learning and research of the discipline are congregated: the Collège de France, the Ecole normale supérieure, the Archives nationales, the Bibliothèque nationale. The most prominent positions in universities are Paris-based and give rise to a fruitful pluralism of posts by incumbents between the various institutions. It is not uncommon to see a professor from the Sorbonne also teaching at the Ecole pratique des hautes etudes, at the Ecole des Chartes, at the Ecole normale supérieure and chairing the *agrégation* board, as well as serving on the Conseil national de l'Université (or one of its predecessors). Throughout the Third Republic, those aspiring to positions at the Sorbonne thus favoured a career as a high-school teacher in Paris with teaching duties at the arts faculty, rather than a teaching position in a provincial faculty. Besides, teachers in provincial faculties earned lower salaries than those in Paris faculties, a discrepancy that is still considerable in spite of occasional adjustments. The two-tier financial framework was only dismantled with 1961.

This Parisian concentration of knowledge and power is evident in the respective division of historical output between the capital and the provinces. Thus, barely 15 per cent of the theses in history defended between 1816 and 1870 were in the provinces. There was still this imbalance, though to a lesser extent, in subsequent decades. For many years, the Sorbonne was the only university to have chairs in history by period, when faculties elsewhere were quite happy with a professorship of history, without further elaboration. Teaching in Paris thus meant access to a specialist position and hence the ability to control the sub-discipline in question. This hierarchy of positions continues throughout the period under study. If this may be explained in the first two thirds of the nineteenth century by the difference in social status (income) and the lure of proximity to the circles of power

in the city, then the abiding attraction of Parisian chairs throughout the twentieth century may be understood in the extent to which they conferred academic power.

Besides these underlying features, the discipline of history has gradually been professionalized in three successive stages.

The French Revolution had led to the closure of all institutions of higher education of the Ancien Régime, as well as the dissolution of academies and learned societies. However, a new system was set up from the time of the Convention (1794-1795) with the creation of the Ecole normale supérieure, followed by Napoleon's Imperial University in 1808. It was there that the faculties of arts and sciences were created, heirs to the arts faculties of the Ancien Régime, and there that doctorates in the arts and sciences were instituted (they had not existed before). These new schools thus took their cue from the professional faculties of law, medicine and theology and were granted the authority to produce their doctors of their own. At first, however, a modification of the initial rules was required for this to happen. Teachers at these schools had theoretically to be doctors to be eligible for recruitment, but the lack of a previous doctorate coerced the state into waiving this rule. The first professors of history in the arts faculties were thus secondary-school teachers, selected by the rectors and designated by the minister, who automatically granted them doctorates by appointing them to their chairs. This practice only started under the July Monarchy, although the title of doctor was not mandatory. (it had, however, to be a doctorate from the arts faculty). At that time, the appointment of a faculty professor to a chair was a ministerial decision in which the college of professors of the faculty concerned was only marginally involved.

During the first half of the 19th century, the role of the universities was basically restricted to organizing the examinations and conferring degrees (mainly the baccalaureate in the provinces, some degrees and doctorates in Paris). Instead of organizing a structured teaching for properly enrolled students, the faculties also organized courses for a large public, and were more concerned about rethorical skills than about scholarly work. The number of teachers varied considerably over the period. They were relatively abundant around 1810, when many faculties of arts were created by Napoleon, of which a whole batch had disappeared by 1815. During the July Monarchy, new faculties were created, and in 1838 a list of 16 joint 'science and arts faculties' was ratified and was to remain in place until the 1950s (the only faculty to be set up later was that of Algiers in the late nineteenth century). Each arts faculty had five chairs of a set profile, including one in history. For its part, the Collège de France had a few chairs in history (especially "History and ethics") and the Ecole des Chartes was founded in 1821 to provide specific training for archivists. If to this date there was a regular network of academic historians in the country, it was a narrow community (about 25-30 people including the institutions of Paris). According to Charles-Olivier Carbonell, it represented only 10 per cent of those who published books on history in the early 1870s. For its part, the Ecole

normale supérieure (ENS) was the only place offering real training of historians through preparation for the *agrégation*. From the outset, therefore, there was an enduring gap between the university and the ENS, home for the training of the historians' elite and matrix of the securest academic careers.

In contrast, the population of amateur historians, during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, formed a significant mass. It was they who made up the bulk of the community of historians, they who made history, in other words, published. Their activity grew especially among the learned societies, which developed significantly from the July Monarchy with the revival of provincial academies and the creation of many new ones (23 were created between 1830 and 1849). In 1824, Arcisse de Caumont founded the Société des antiquaires de Normandie and, ten years later, the Société française pour la conservation des Monuments, the future Société d'Archéologie. He was also behind the first archaeological and scientific congresses in 1833. In 1839 he created a federalizing body, the Institut des Provinces, the purpose of which was to bring learned societies together. These thrived locally throughout the nineteenth century (there were more than 200 in the 1870s), publishing studies of local history and editions of source material and participating in the setting up of museums around the private collections of their members. The academies were generally multidisciplinary, with a more or less lion's share of their activity devoted to history, and remained true to the encyclopaedic ideal of the Enlightenment. Specialization occurred slowly; perceptible from the 1820s, it accounted for 90 per cent of new creations by the end of the century.

At first these societies brought amateurs and professionals together, the only real difference between them being that the latter were paid by the state to do what the former did for free. Archivists, museum curators, librarians, secondary-school teachers, and sometimes teachers in higher education rubbed shoulders with enlightened amateurs often from the aristocracy and clergy. For a long time women were absent (around 1875, they represented only two per cent of authors of historical works), and their presence only became significant after the First World War. In 1926, they represented less than ten per cent of members of the Antiquaires de Normandie, but almost a third of the membership of the Société française d'archéologie in 1935.

Historians of the early nineteenth century were primarily philosophers or literati and the distinction between professionals and amateurs irrelevant. Output showed great diversity, both in subject-matter and form. Gradually, however, interest in sources became the norm, with a focusing on the Middle Ages. Much historical work revolved around the publication of "unpublished material", both by the Comité des travaux historiques and by many learned societies ("Documents inédits de l'histoire de France"). The July Monarchy was a period of major editorial

activity with the publication of several collections of "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France". The Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres then held an important role: this was the body that funded research and publications at a time when university did not play this role at all. The Chartists (students at the Ecole des Chartes) played a pivotal role in unearthing sources and in making them accessible. Needless to say, their training, combining philology and diplomacy, meant they were up to the task. Their role was crucial to the marked development medieval history underwent in France during this period. Through them, the departmental record offices were to become, from the time of the Second Empire, centres of historical research. Yet history, especially in this period, was a tool at the heart of political debate. It was at this time that the political divide was most in evidence between the liberals, such as François Guizot and Augustin Thierry, heirs to the French Revolution, and the counter-revolutionaries, such as Montlosier and Joseph de Maistre, abiding by the notion of the superiority of the nobility over the middle classes. For their own part, republican and socialist historians like Edgar Quinet or Louis Blanc stressed the central role of the people. In form, historical output (when it was not publishing sources) settled into a lyrical and literary mode (Michelet), borrowing its codes wholesale from a romantic literary output steeped in history (Alexandre Dumas or Victor Hugo). Alongside the various documents and memoirs serving the history of France, there ranked major compendious histories, often written by those who had been excluded from power, such as Augustin Thierry or Jules Michelet.

If national history remained the intellectual frame of reference, the conditions of its output evolved with a growing awareness of the pitfalls of an all too literary narration. This was initially the result of a Catholic movement among the Chartists, who with the foundation in 1866 of the *Revue des Questions historiques*, sought to promote a critical approach. Furthermore, the need for an empirical confrontation between reflection and documentation was put forward by Fustel of Coulange. Paul Meyer and Paulin Paris's *Revue critique d'Histoire et de Littérature*, founded in 1866, was the first vehicle to give voice to this new approach. Ten years later Gabriel Monod founded the *Revue historique*, which throughout the Third Republic was to be the forum for history on the road to professionalism. At the same time the need to reform the institutional frameworks of research and higher education began to be considered. In 1865, Victor Duruy, the historian and Minister of Public Instruction, hastened an investigation into the state of historical studies. Having observing their weakness he proposed the establishment of the Ecole pratique des hautes etudes (EPHE). This institution, founded in 1868, comprised four sections, the last of which was dedicated to history and philology. Unlike universities taken up with the conferring of degrees, the EPHE was empowered to develop genuine historical research on the German seminar model. The terms of recruitment and teaching

performance placed it outside the prevalent academic model. A fifth section on religious science was founded in 1886.

There is no doubt that last quarter of the nineteenth century was a time for widespread professionalization of the French university system, both on an intellectual plane and in the establishment of a professional category independent of the other orders of education and of amateurs.

The connection between the rise of academic historians as a professional group and the overall reform of the French university system in the 1880s and 1890s came about because of this reform. The 1880s saw the emergence of the genuine student with the creation of bursaries for degree study and the *agrégation*. With the creation of the status of lecturer (a young doctor whose function was to assist the professors and teach in smaller groups), the more precise titles for chairs (the first chair of contemporary history was created at the Sorbonne in 1886 for A. Rambaud, with chairs in archaeology appearing from 1876) and their growth in numbers, this period witnessed the formation of a real professorial body (rising from 42 historians with higher-education posts in 1875 to 100 in 1900). The reform also gave academics more say in the recruitment of new teachers, while the appointments themselves became increasingly no more than a registering procedure at ministerial level. In the early years of the twentieth century, the community of professional historians was thus furnished with the means of control of their profession, through the *agrégation*, the doctorate and career management, all extant practices, but where the terms of operation became clearer at that time. Through the active involvement of university historians in this university reform, it is not surprising to see why this discipline was the one which recorded the strongest growth in terms of posts and theses during this period. By the end of the nineteenth century, history held an important place in French higher education. Not only did it constitute a significant share of the chairs in arts faculties, but it was also represented at the EPHE, the Ecole des Chartes, the Collège de France and the Ecole normale supérieure. It also lay behind the foundation of French schools abroad such as the French School of Athens in 1846, the French School of Rome in 1873 and the French School of the Far East in 1901. Growth in the community of professional historians also benefited from the creation of a clutch of institutions. In 1872, Emile Boutmy founded the Ecole libre des sciences politiques at which the teaching of history was important. In 1881 the Ecole du Louvre was founded, dedicated to teaching art history. The Ecole Normale Superieure was supplemented by the Ecole normale supérieure de jeunes filles at Sèvres. The Ecole normale supérieure de jeunes filles de Fontenay was founded in 1880 and the Ecole normale supérieure de garçons de Saint-Cloud in 1882. Although intended to train teachers for primary-school work, these last two schools were gradually transformed around the Second World War into colleges for the training of teachers and thus of historians. There, as at the Ecole

Normale Supérieure (ENS), in the rue d'Ulm, history for the *agrégation* and CAPES (Certificat d'Aptitude pédagogique à l'enseignement secondaire) was taught.

From a scholarly standpoint, the last two decades of the nineteenth century may be said to mark a positivist turning point. They had been preceded, in the 1860s and 1870s, by the introduction in France of the German technique of criticism of sources. Its development in France relied heavily on its conformity with "state ideology" in opposition to Catholicism. History claimed to be a science, especially from 1876 through the pronouncements of the founders of the *Revue historique*. Therein the rules of historical method took shape: the systematic use of sources and their criticism, the summary only coming at the end of the work. In 1898, two teachers from the Sorbonne, the Chartist, Charles-Victor Langlois, and Charles Seignobos published the *Introduction aux études historiques*, which encapsulated all the norms of this new historical practice. In parallel with this standardization of historical work, apparent in the establishment of a specific degree in history in 1894, of a higher-education diploma in history prior to *agrégation* and in its formalization in the defence of theses, the first true professional associations were set up, soon publishing their own journals. In 1899 the Société d'histoire moderne appeared, followed a few years later by the Société des études robespierristes [Society for Robespierre Studies]. It was also the beginning of a significant collective output of tools: inventories of archives, bibliographies, publishing of catalogues, of indexes and learned manuals, as well as a wide-ranging publishing venture: the *Histoire de France* edited by Lavisse.

The relationship between amateurs and professionals embodied in their joint participation in learned societies tended to weaken. One indicator of this distancing is the low involvement by academic historians in local history in the long term. If one can observe an apparent surge of academic studies devoted to a regional approach, the explanation lies in the establishment of a higher-education diploma in history, prior to *agrégation* for which the use of local resources was an asset in terms of speed. However, the setting up of a dozen chairs of regional history (such as the chair of history at Poitou in the faculty of arts in Poitiers), with funding most often authorized by the law of 1896, appears to have been a flash in the pan, and most disappeared in the inter-war period. The paradox of low involvement by academic historians in regional history is particularly significant when it is placed in the more general context of expansion of regionalist intellectual movements (for example, the creation of historico-ethnographic museums like the Museon Arlaten, Arles, founded by Frédéric Mistral in 1896). This is particularly true since at the same time, the state encouraged the development of local-history committees, supposedly to bring together higher-education and secondary teachers with a view to using local history in the primary and secondary schools. Academics were expected to coordinate local scholarly research, but the link was never really organized organically. It was also a period of resurgence of learned societies, before falling dormant in the inter-war

period. Indeed, the attraction of Paris continued to predominate and shape careers. The numerical imbalance persisted; for in 1901 and 1906, 48 theses in history were defended in the capital against 7 in the provinces, a stable ratio when compared to previous decades. Careers were a function of the opportunities arising for the creation of posts and followed a national pattern organized by the centre. Few teachers practised in their region of origin because the golden road to Parisian academic posts went for the most part through the Ecole normale supérieure. There was then a division of labour between professional historians engaged in national careers and learned societies populated by amateurs into whose hands local history had been left.

The inter-war period marked a lull in the momentum of development the discipline had experienced since the 1870s. On the one hand, the numerous appointments, consequent upon the creation of chairs and lecturers' posts, brought to university a generation which was to remain there for good. At that time, it was customary to work up to the age of 75, which led to a long waiting list for those who had not been able to secure a job before 1900. On the other hand, the general economic situation was not conducive to the development of the academic body. There was stagnation if not a reduction in the number of posts by about 6 per cent in the inter-war period, especially in the wake of the budget cuts that bit from 1932. The only exceptions to this economic downturn were the transformation of preparatory-school education in Algiers into a full-blown faculty in 1918 and the reestablishment of the University of Strasbourg two years later. Owing to a structural quirk, the teaching body was aging and the positions of authority (*agrégation*, recruitment) were becoming more concentrated.

At the same time, career steps were becoming clearer and tougher. For those who wanted later to aspire to a chair in Paris it was now better not only being a professor in a provincial faculty, but also being a doctor of the University of Paris with a position as a lecturer at the Sorbonne. It was almost impossible to hope to enter directly by the front door. And to obtain a chair, it helped increasingly to have been an alumnus of the Ecole normale supérieure and the Ecole des Chartes. Other distinctions, such as having been a former student of the French schools in Rome and Athens, were invaluable assets. The environment was also characterized by the formation of permanent dynasties and marked inbreeding, while its social recruitment closed sharply. The networks were also very active in the shaping of careers: contributors to the *Histoire de France* under Lavisse's editorship were virtually assured of a job.

The university, especially the arts faculty of Paris, was emerging as the historical place of power to which other institutions were subject. The Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes was a place of plural positions: almost all the directors of studies were actually professors with posts at the Sorbonne, the Ecole des Chartes and the Collège de France. Moreover, if we look at the profiles of teachers, those whose

careers were closest to the traditional standard of excellence were to be found in the faculties, while the EPHE, and to some extent the Collège de France, were without exception the most open. This was the case of foreigners, or women like Germaine Rouillard, an expert on Byzantine history. She was never to be elected to the Sorbonne and would spend her entire career at the EPHE.

Furthermore, the Committee of historical work was in the hands of academics, particularly professors at the Sorbonne, who were thus in a position to control and manage the output of amateurs by imposing the use of academic standards. Some of the learned societies responded by creating regional federations, responsible for organizing conferences at which academics were by and large absent.

Historical output focused principally on French political and diplomatic history revived somewhat, both in substance and form. Strong tensions ensued within the community between the youngest members and the generation which had accumulated all positions of power. This conflict can be discerned for example in the heated debates on the history *agrégation* in 1932. The rise of economic and social history and of history of civilizations advocated by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch with the creation of the *Annales* in 1929 was thus to remain very limited. These branches of history are only to be found in specific institutions such as the Collège de France and the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, and were marginal in the older and therefore more traditional historic institution. But the crisis was not resolved through intellectual reappraisal. It was the temporary and automatic outcome of lowering the retirement age from 75 to 65 in 1936. There followed the possibility of a revival of the teaching body, reflected for example in the joint arrival at the Sorbonne of the two rivals Louis Halphen and Marc Bloch in 1937.

Paradoxically, despite the tense situation, the inter-war years clearly affirmed the four main historical periods and the introduction of more specific training, with chairs with more specific titles. Groups became more autonomous, like specialists of the Antique, for example. These differed from all other historians in that they were not all historians by training, and sometimes far from it. Among them many had an *agrégation* in letters, even grammar, or were specialists in ancient languages. Among them was to be found the highest proportion of *normaliens*, and of course of former students of the French schools in Rome and Athens. This small community had its own codes and its own career paths, borrowing only partially from the more general model. For their part, archaeology and art history broke away from history to establish specific and distinct curricula of their own. The first benefited greatly from the establishment of the CNRS in the 1930s, in which it soon assumed a more prominent position than at university. Geography, a discipline originally designed as auxiliary science to history and without its own identity became progressively more independent with the creation of specific posts, a trend that would eventually lead to its own *agrégation* in geography in 1942.

The establishment of institutions dedicated to research funding were to be of benefit to history, at least at first. The fourth section of the Caisse de recherche scientifique established in 1924 gave financial support to historians' individual research projects of historians in the late 1920s. In 1930, the Caisse national de recherche scientifique provided the first paid research posts. Of the 34 positions set up in the social sciences in the 1930s, history and geography combined obtained more than half of them. When the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) was set up in 1939, history received a third of the funds allocated to the social sciences. This windfall helped to launch the first major national surveys, but mainly to finance large bibliographical projects. The first laboratory of history was created in 1938: the Institut de recherche en histoire des textes. But this financial influx only gave minimal support to the proponents of the new economic and social history. Funding was widely used to enable doctors, corralled in their high schools because of the unfavourable employment conditions, to have a university-level post. This resulted in a rather high average age on recruitment.

It was only after the Second World War that the contribution of new historiography brought by the *Annales* school had an impact on French higher education. It was a historian, Charles Moraza, ensconced at the EPHE, who would convince the then director of higher education into creating a sixth section at the EPHE dedicated to the science of man in 1947. History was already represented in the fourth and fifth sections, but here it was to combine the "new" economic and social history with those disciplines to which it was intellectually close (economics, sociology and anthropology). Historians formed a third of the teaching body, combining for the most part their jobs as directors of studies with positions within the university. Their presence remained significant in the following decades and they are now widely represented in the Ecole des Hautes etudes en sciences sociales, which was formed out of the sixth section in 1975. This is where collective historical investigations are initiated, in particular within the Centre de recherche historique. The way this institution is perceived internationally seems to suggest that this new historiography is dominant among French historians. This is not, however, the case and most of them, teachers in the faculties of the Paris region and in the provinces, continue to practise a more traditional form of history. However, it is certain that historians of the sixth section and the Ecole des Hautes etudes en sciences sociales have helped pave the way for a number of innovative projects, such as family, gender or colonial history.

The general economic situation of the 1950s and 1960s saw a very sharp rise in student numbers and the opening of new universities. The number of teaching jobs grew concomitantly, even if it was in most cases, with precarious and subordinate positions. Bodies of assistants (with a renewable employment contract

of one year) were created across the various faculties. They appeared in 1942 in the arts faculties: in the case of history it was mostly men or women with an *agrégation* working on their theses to whom their employers offered a way into higher education. In 1960 a new body of assistant lecturers at a level below that of lecturer was set up. The introduction of the 3rd cycle thesis in the early 1960s allowed tenured recruitment of younger teachers, offering them the opportunity to obtain a first degree of doctor in a reduced number of years (around 3 years). The number of historians in higher education rose from less than 200 around 1950 to about 700 in 1965. The growth of the community continued steadily in the following decades with over 1,000 in the early 1980s and approximately 2,000 in 2005. The number of universities grew significantly at the same time from 16 in 1955 to nearly 80 today. The statutes of the university also moved towards simplification with the introduction in 1984 of a twofold body: professors (without a chair since the reform of 1968) and lecturers. The state thesis and the 3rd-cycle thesis disappeared, giving way to a new-style thesis on the model of the Ph.D. and a Habilitation à diriger des recherches (HDR) (an attestation of fitness to undertake research). However, the new growth in student numbers since the late 1980s has led to a massive use of untenured positions and the creation of a special status, the PRAG (detached professors with *agrégation* in higher education).

These giant recruitment drives had two main effects on the evolution of the historical discipline. Rejuvenation and the proliferation of junior positions altered balances within the discipline. The client relationships maintained by a chaired professor and his students were diluted in the mass, complicating the arrangements for self-monitoring by the community. A proliferation of subject-matters and fields of research followed, tending to organize the discipline in so many sub-disciplines, as evidenced by the creation of countless specialized journals (the first journal on the history of women, *Pénélope*, dates from 1979). It was in the 1960s that the first real professional associations appeared: for ancient historians in 1958, contemporary historians in 1965 and medievalists in 1969. Associations of academics dealing with particular subject areas were set up, such as the association of economists historians in 1965.

The last thirty years have been a time of acceleration in terms of history output. Fifty journals (not counting the publications of research centres) were established between 1945 and 1995, and the trend is still continuing. In addition, since the 1970s, learned societies and historical associations have proliferated. One explanation for this dynamism in the field of history probably lies in the demographic effect. Growth of students has had a knock-on effect on the number of doctors, under conditions of low recruitment after 1970. Many young doctors who will never get a university job and are teaching in secondary schools, beleaguer the associations. Apart from the early 1990s, the tense situation owing to the high number of doctors and the limited number of posts is a powerful motor in historical

output. At the same time, state intervention in the field of history is becoming greater. The last twenty years have been the occasion of many commemorations; they have seen the establishment of committees of history in all ministries, all operations for which both academics and young doctors without a post are required. On the other hand, growth in output can also be measured through the *Bibliographie annuelle de l'histoire de France* (published by the CNRS since 1953) which numbered about 8,000 books and articles in 1953-1954, around 9,000 in 1964 and 15,500 in 1992.

The establishment of the CNRS from 1945 has also introduced a new variable into the field of the French University. History had received a certain number of credit funding and posts during the 1930s but did not take advantage of the development of this institution outside the university. With the exception of the Institute of History and research texts (founded in 1938), it received only two of its own laboratories in 1978: the Institute of Modern and Contemporary History and the Institut d'histoire du temps présent. It is much involved in many laboratories (CNRS-University), but CNRS historians remain a small community. The institution has essentially allowed the representatives of specialized sub-disciplines, of a marginal nature in the university, such as specialists in non-European areas. They are administratively part of the same instance as the same recruitment drive as modernist and contemporary historians, but in fact come from quite specific career paths.

The lack of research institutes in history, outside the university set-up, has made this subject a hunting preserve of the university. The College de France, EHESS and EPHE home for their part of highly specialized minorities with original profiles, CNRS forming the third space. The entire historical output maintains constants in the long run: the central subject of study remains France (except of course for ancient historians), incursions outside the national territory are limited to Western Europe or North America. The arrangements for exchange and academic mobility like those of French schools in Rome and Athens, the French historic mission in Germany and Fullbright Scholarships define the contours of the "known world". The few historians to come out of it are in fact specialists of far-flung civilizations, trained in languages and philology, even in anthropology. Their belonging to the world of historians is thus purely theoretical and is the outcome of administratively carving up knowledge, which has little to do with actual practices. French historians of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first are men (two-thirds, and representing three-quarters of the professors), graduates of the history *agrégation*, working in France or its immediate neighbours. Of the 2,000 historians recorded in 2005, more than 40 per cent are contemporary historians. Those whose career paths are the fastest are undoubtedly the *normaliens*, especially when they add they were former students of the French schools of Rome or Athens. Within the academic hierarchy, history is without doubt one of the disciplines in which social and academic recruitment is highest.

Therefore, it is not surprising that compared to other social sciences, history as a discipline should only have been slightly feminized and then rather late in the day. Only 3 university professors were women in 1965 and only 11 per cent lecturers. While there were women at the Ecole des Chartes from 1920, they only accounted for half the student population in the late 1930s. Curricula for the top stream have remained separate over a very long time; men's and women's *agrégations* only merged in 1976 and teacher-training colleges (écoles normales supérieures) only went mixed in the mid-1980s. It is in ancient and medieval history that women are most numerous (over 40 per cent, so there are less than 35 per cent of them in modern and contemporary history). There are also many women in art history, which is explained by the fact that this discipline was replacing Latin in the women's *agrégation*. While half of the lecturers are women, they are no more than a quarter of the professors and directors of studies.

These factors show how history ranks high in the hierarchy of academic disciplines: a highly standardized curriculum, strong presence of *normaliens*, weakness on the part of women. There is also an extraordinary Parisian centralism, since 44 per cent of posts are in the capital or the Paris region. The concentration of the discipline's centres of prestige (EHESS, EPHE, Collège de France) partly explains this phenomenon. But above all else it is a measure of the enduring presence of the ideal historical circle revolving around such symbolically laden places as the National Archives and the BNF. The CNRS itself, despite an active decentralization policy in the 1980s and 1990s has been unable to upset this balance.

Chronology

1790 Archives nationales

1794 Ecole normale supérieure

1796: Archives départementales

1802: Académie celtique

1808: Imperial University, foundation of the arts faculties, with chairs in history

1821: Ecole des Chartes

1824: Société des antiquaires de Normandie founded by Arcisse de Caumont

1830: men's *agrégation* in history and geography

1832: Académie des Sciences morales et politiques

1833: Société de l'histoire de France
First archaeological and scientific congress of learned societies

1834: Comité des Travaux historiques founded by Guizot
Société française pour la conservation des Monuments

1844: *Revue archéologique*

1866: *Revue des Questions historiques*

1868: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE)

1872: Ecole libre des sciences politiques (ELSP)

1876: *Revue historique*

1881: Ecole normale supérieure de Jeunes filles de Sèvres

1882: Ecole du Louvre

1884: women's *agrégation* in history and geography

1886: Contemporary history, Faculté des Lettres de Paris

1894: history degree and Diplôme d'études supérieures d'histoire

1900: *Revue de Synthèse*

1901: Société d'histoire moderne and *Revue d'histoire moderne*

1907: Société des études robespierristes and *Annales de la Révolution française*

1910: Association des professeurs d'histoire et géographie de l'enseignement public (APHG)

1927: first national congress of French historians
1929: *Les Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*
1938: Institut d'histoire et de recherche des textes (IHRT)

1939: CNRS

1943: degree and *agrégation* in geography

1947: VIth section of the EPHE becomes the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales in 1975.

1962: Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris (will become EHESS)

1976: *agrégations* in history for men and women made the same

1978: CRNS Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (IHMC) and Institut d'histoire du Temps présent (IHTP) at the CNRS

1979: *Pénélope. Pour l'histoire des femmes*

1984: Thèse Nouveau Régime and Habilitation à diriger des recherches. Reform of university statutes

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